

CASSILIS HYDRO-ELECTRIC SCHEME

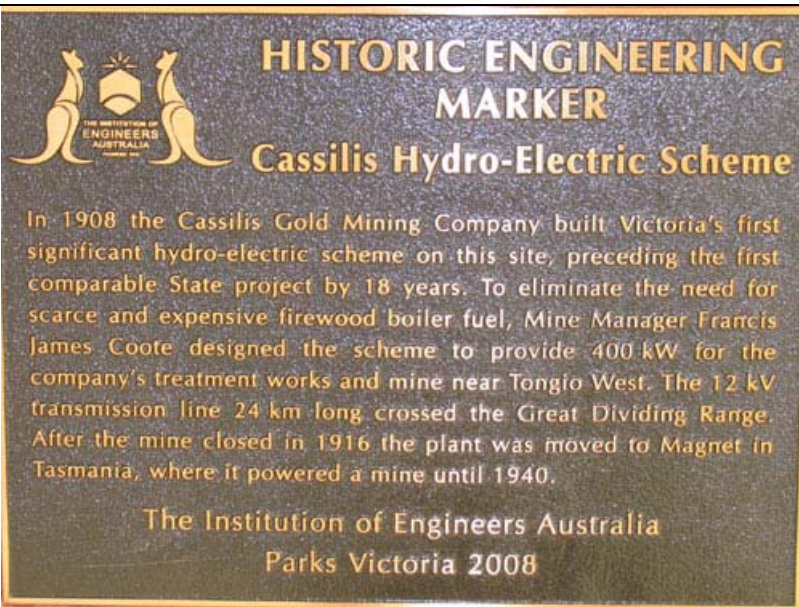
**Award of an
HISTORIC ENGINEERING MARKER
on 14th November 2008**



Remains of pelton wheel mounting

CEREMONY REPORT

**Prepared by Graeme Deveson
Omeo Historical Society**



Top left, the plaque bestowed by the Institution of Engineers in recognition of the importance of the site.

Above, some of the new signage provided by Parks Victoria in support of this importance.

Left, involvement was spread amongst a varied group mostly represented here: from left, yours truly **Graeme Deveson**, President Omeo Historical Society. We have assisted with information for signage and the organising of this event.

Mark Avery, Grandson of John Avery snr who managed much of the construction and most importantly provided a priceless photographic record, Mark is an honoured guest.

Don Bartlett, Chair of Engineering Heritage Victoria.

John McCutchan, Committee member EHV and the person who has researched and accumulated all of the material relevant to this story.

Craig Ingram MP independent member for East Gippsland. Craig is known for his local support and was on hand to unveil the plaque.

Dave Foster, Head Ranger for Parks Victoria at Omeo. Dave is responsible for this area and has coordinated the whole setting up of new signage, plaque mounting, area maintenance etc, and well done too!!





As Craig said: "we don't do staged shots". Of course not, but it did seem appropriate to show the main players while the audience was largely assembled and just before things got underway. We had a great crowd of 82 persons from both the engineering society based more in Melbourne and suburbs as well as by the local East Gippsland community.



Owen Peake, Chair Engineering Heritage Australia spoke first, outlining the big picture---



and then, Don Bartlett spoke-----



John McCutchan spoke of his long association with this story but didn't know what was to come in at least one respect-----



Dave Foster spoke---



Craig duly unveiled the plaque---



Don spoke again, this time to go over the real dedication John McCutchan has shown over a more than 30 year period in gathering and interpreting the story of the Hydro Scheme----



and bestowing on an unsuspecting J. McCutchan an Award of Merit from Engineering Heritage Australia.
a great honour and well earned, congratulations
John---



East Gippsland Shires Anthony Nelson and Chris Waites talking with Don Bartlett.



Daryl Gallagher, Swifts Creeks and Alister Smart (25 years Playschool host), Brookville enjoying the day and a chat.



Tom Jack, Swifts Creek chatting with East Gippsland Shire Councillor Ben Buckley.
Left: Shire Director Helen Martin with Shire Planner Anthony Nelson



John McCutchan providing background material for one of the attending schools, in this case Kate Commins from Swifts Creek



Past Omeo Historical Society President and keen history fan Brett Lee with Dave Foster, Head Ranger Parks Vic. Omeo and Omeo police officer Snr Const. Jack Paul.

Secondary College.



John McCutchan addressing the audience.



Long view of the setting.



Following the formalities many guests drove to the "pondage" area and from there down to the Power Station site on the Cobungra River. This is Trudy Anderson and Mark Avery (guest of honour)



Cr Ben Buckley and Helen Martin, camera hogs you two---



Parks and DSE provided a shuttle service down to the Power Station site which was much appreciated but some chose to walk.



Thanks to Brendan and Jeremy from DSE Swifts Creek (yellow tops).



At the Power Station site, Helen, not again!



Checking out the new interpretive signage.



A proud Dave Foster with the Power Station sign.



A really lovely spot, that large mounting left of centre is where the pelton wheel was situated.



On Friday evening many of the guests from the afternoon presentation gathered again to hear John give his last ever talk and presentation of the hydro story. They were joined by a number of guests who were unable to come to the afternoon event. 61 people were present in the Masonic hall in Omeo.

The next morning Saturday the 15th about 30 people again gathered to take a tour of the Cassilis Gold Mining Company treatment works site in Powers Gully.

John McCutchan hadn't been here since 1981 and Graeme Deveson from Omeo Historical Society along with local resident and historical enthusiast Steve Pearman were able to help John in locating the various parts of the site and generally inform the group on various aspects.

APOLOGY from Graeme, the camera was accidentally set to "portrait" mode giving these poor results, I didn't notice and fully expect to be taken out and flogged at some point----



We gathered at a point on the road near the plant which also happens to be where the earliest of the residue sands (tailings) are located (red either side of road)



Later tailings were deposited in a long sequence of an estimated 68000 tons, arsenic rich and the farthest visible here are called "slimes" which resulted from cyanide processing.



We climbed higher to the various parts of the treatment plant, the whole site was explored---



This view with the cars in the background give some idea of the steepness of the site, below, high on a hillside---



With time limited it was then back along Powers Gully to the site of the treatment works of the King Cassilis Mine. This area holds a great collection of mining equipment from over a long period and representing numerous extraction methods. In fact the Statement of Significance for this area as written for Heritage Victoria indicates that it probably the only site existing in Australia which shows such a range of processes.



The rock work and its associated process are understood to be one of only two examples left in the world, the other is in South Africa.



John McCutchan had not been to this area before and was most interested and able to put his engineering knowledge to good use.



Steve Pearman was able to give some very interesting accounts of the complex chemical transformations that took place.





Above: Mark Avery spent a good part of his childhood here with his family and was able to recount first hand some of what went on, some amusing stories---

Left: In about the middle of an about 380 foot long processing system which includes the earlier mentioned unique rock work built by Cornish masons, brought in for the purpose and which Steve is able to tell us were Freemasons. Here talking with Trudy Anderson.



There was a fair bit more to see but it had to end. John McCutchan and the other guests from Engineering Heritage Victoria had to head home. Thank you to them and thank you to all the other guests both local and more removed. It was a very successful two days and we are all the richer for it. The 7 display panels which John has used to present the Hydro story have been left with the Omeo Historical Society and we shall put them on permanent display. The original documentation along with all the details have become part of Melbourne University's archives and will be well looked after and most importantly will be available to anyone for study purposes. John is sure they will be available on the university website in due course. Thank you everyone.



January 2010, The Omeo Historical Society has had the panels used by John over the years framed. They are now on permanent display in the Omeo CourtHouse. Look good too!.